

Children in Southwark

Newsletter of Southwark Children and Families Alliance

No.1 - October 1998

New Alliance: Ready to Go!

Southwark Children and Families Alliance is set to become a major new force in the planning and development of services for children in the borough.

The Alliance has received three years funding from the National Lottery Charities Board to bring together voluntary organisations working with children in Southwark.

Voluntary organisations already play a key role in providing family support, supplementary education, advocacy, early years places and many other services for children locally. By acting together as an Alliance we will be able to create a powerful voice for the children's voluntary sector as a whole, and for the interests of the disadvantaged children we work with. By sharing information and expertise, we will also be able to develop our capacity to provide quality services.

New opportunities for the voluntary sector

This is an exciting time for children's services in Southwark with opportunities for the voluntary sector to forge new partnerships with health, education and social services. The Children and Families Alliance will be working to ensure that this potential is fully realised in such major local initiatives as the Health Action Zone and the North Southwark Education Action Zone.

The Alliance is based at Southwark Community Care Forum, which has already succeeded in positioning the voluntary sector as central to the planning and provision of services for adults. We will be looking closely at what lessons we can learn from this experience.

Southwark Community Care Forum has had a children's focus group and Debbie Welch has already undertaken some short-term Alliance

development work with funding from the Barings Foundation. They have now recruited Neil Orr to build on this work as the Alliance's full-time children and families policy officer.

Children and Families Policy Officer in post

Neil Orr came into post in September. He worked previously at Voluntary Action Westminster involving voluntary organisations in the joint planning of health and social services for both children and adults. Prior to this he worked at the National Children's Bureau on UK-wide and European projects on children affected by HIV. He has published material on children's rights and HIV, and is on the management committee of a central London family centre working with Bengali and Chinese families.

The next meeting of the Children and Families Alliance will feature an overview of government policy on children, updates on the Health and Education Action Zones, children's joint planning and the Area Child Protection Committee, as well as a discussion of the future of the Alliance. If you haven't confirmed your place yet, please call Neil Orr (0171 252 5859)

Children & Families Alliance Meeting

Open to all voluntary organisations working with disadvantaged children in Southwark

**2:00 pm – 4:30 pm,
Tuesday 27th
October 1998**

*in the Main Meeting Room,
Cambridge House,
131 Camberwell Road, SE5.*

Parenting action programmes

Parenting has been granted a central role in the government's policy agenda for tackling such issues as social exclusion and crime. In this article, Neil Orr looks at the experience of Southwark's voluntary organisations in this area and some of the issues arising.

1. The national policy background

In August 1998, Home Secretary Jack Straw announced the creation of the National Family & Parenting Institute with £2m of government money (to be up and running from April 1999). Jack Straw has expressed the hope that parenting classes will become as common as antenatal classes, and the Institute will have a role in promoting and accrediting such schemes.

On the same day, the government unveiled the £540m Sure Start programme focused on disadvantaged pre-school children (under-3s). In an initial three-year programme, 250 centres will be opened in areas of greatest need, combining advice and support for parents with a range of child care, early education, health and play facilities. A Sure Start outreach worker will visit all mothers within the first three months of a child's birth (in addition to visits from health visitors).

The Government's Crime and Disorder Act makes provision for new Parenting Orders, whereby the court can require parents of young offenders to take part in parenting programmes.

2. The voluntary sector and parenting

Voluntary organisations are supporting parents in Southwark in diverse ways. Specific work on parenting skills includes the following:

- The *Newpin* model of working with families involves long-term practical and emotional support through individual and group work. A Personal Development Programme covers "Our skills as parents", "Family Play Programme", "Befriending and supporting skills" and "Making Choices". Other areas covered included housing issues, money management, relationships and so on. Newpin projects in Southwark include: a fathers group with a 28-week training programme (0171 703 6326); Peckham Teenage Mothers Project, offering support for up to 2 years (0171 252 8283); and the Walworth Newpin centre (0171 703 5271).

- *South London Family Service Unit*: (0171 733 6291) have National Lottery funding for two par-

enting support workers, and are currently running two parenting groups. The groups run for 6-7 weeks and combine therapeutic, social learning and behavioural approaches. SLFSU intend to undertake research into the impact of the groups with a view to developing practice. A separate project working with the families of young offenders has been funded from joint finance. This includes a 12-week parenting programme. The wider support SLFSU offers to families often involves addressing parenting issues through counselling, group work, play work, family meetings and other approaches.

- *Charterhouse in Southwark* (0171 403 4367) is establishing a joint-financed project offering community-based support to families with vulnerable children (aged 10-14). Task-centred support aimed at improving parenting skills will be offered in the context of an integrated holistic approach to meeting the needs of families, encompassing therapeutic peer groups for parents and for children, family therapy, and one-to-one counselling. Other work supporting parents includes a young mothers project, toy library, parent and toddler sessions, Bangladeshi family support projects and support for families referred by Social Services.

- *Blackfriars Settlement* (0171 928 5859) is working with the SE1 Consortium, a partnership of local providers. It is planned to improve parenting skills in the context of an expansion of high quality childcare places, peripatetic play workers and a mobile toy library.

- *Children's Society*: the Genesis Project (0171 277 4898) works to involve parents at Warwick Park School. A Health Action Zone bid has been submitted to extend this project including running 'successful parenting' programmes in local primary schools.

- *Home-Start Southwark* (0181 299 6049) aims to promote the welfare of families with at least one child under five years of age. Volunteers are recruited, trained and supported to visit and support families in their own homes. Volunteers help to improve the skills and self-confidence of parents by advice and example in the wider context of helping to reduce family isolation and stress.

● *Pre-School Learning Alliance*: Nationally, the PLA has received lottery funding for the Family Learning Millennium Awards scheme (01732 770630). Grants of between £1500 and £10,000 are available to develop family learning projects covering parenting and relationship education, as well as family literacy and numeracy, personal development and other skills.

In Southwark, the local branch (0181 299 1878) have run workshops in parenting in playgroup settings (with crèche provided); an issue they have identified is that the parents who might be thought to need the classes most are often the least likely to attend. Southwark PLA has in the past run courses in play which parents have attended, and has also unsuccessfully sought funding for a Speech & Language Worker to work with parents at improving the language and communications skills of children (they have identified poor skills amongst pre-school children locally).

3. Issues

● Parents have a wide variety of needs, and parenting action programmes need to reflect this. While a short structured programme of parenting sessions might be suitable for some parents, for others the very notion of classes or group work will be a barrier to participating. Parents dealing with issues such as emotional and behavioural difficulties, domestic violence or crime may need intensive long-term support to be able to participate in parenting action programmes. Many will be reluctant to do so, perhaps because they lack the confidence to take part in groups, or because they do not wish to discuss their difficulties with others.

● Improving parenting is not simply a matter of teaching task-based parenting skills. Emotional issues are also important; some families may require therapeutic support, counselling, family mediation, help with stress management and other services. The wider social context impacting on stress within families also needs to be considered, such as poverty, housing and the availability of childcare.

● Some parents may feel that an invitation to take part in parenting programmes contains an implicit criticism of their parenting skills. The danger of a stigma being attached to taking part is likely to become more acute if parenting programmes come to be seen as a form of punishment imposed on 'bad' parents by the courts. Parenting programmes need to be marketed in a positive way, by for instance linking them in with play provision, toy libraries, or parent and toddler sessions.

● Targeted parenting action programmes can play a useful role where children demonstrate low levels of stimulation, delayed language and communication development or behaviour problems. However it is important that such children are comprehensively assessed to determine whether they may have underlying specific learning difficulties or behaviour disorders. These disorders commonly have an important genetic component and include specific learning problems such as dyslexia, processing difficulties, ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and Asperger's Syndrome. Particular parenting skills are needed to help children to succeed with these disorders, as well as specific educational, social support and (in some cases) medical interventions.

● Much of the debate around parenting implies that what constitutes good enough parenting is self-evident. In fact some areas, such as discipline, remain hotly contested. For instance, most children's welfare organisations would argue against physical punishment, but Paul Boateng has affirmed the Government's belief that "Smacking has a place" in parental discipline. There needs to be continuing debate both locally and nationally about the content of parenting programmes, and how we can define quality and standards in this area. This will need to take into account the range of family structures and perspectives on family life found in Southwark's diverse communities.

4. Conclusion

Parenting is now central to the local and national social policy agenda. Voluntary organisations in Southwark are already working with parents and carers in a range of innovative ways to help them improve their confidence and competence in looking after their children. No one parenting action programme will be suitable for all parents in all situations. Instead it will be necessary to develop a range of non-stigmatising and culturally appropriate approaches in various settings, taking into account the differing support needs of parents, carers and children. The voluntary sector is uniquely placed to help deliver diversity in this way.

An expanded version of this article is being submitted as a policy paper to Southwark's Joint Strategy and Commissioning Group for Children, who are currently discussing early intervention via parenting action programmes. If you have any comments or are undertaking parenting work not covered in this article please contact Neil Orr (0171 252 5859).

Joint Finance Priorities

Joint Finance is Department of Health funding used to fund innovative projects. Applications are now being invited for projects which meet with the following Southwark priorities for 1999/2000:

The Children's Joint Strategy and Commissioning Group's priorities are:

- schemes addressing school attendance issues related to behavioural and family difficulties;
- schemes which promote language and communication skills of under-5s;
- parenting action programmes to improve parenting skills and parent child interaction;
- respite services for children with disabilities;
- schemes supporting children with emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- community-based support to enable children with disabilities to live at home.

Southwark Health Alliance has selected health promotion with children and young people as its priority. Approximately £30,000 is available to fund one or two projects aiming to enable young people (up to the age of 21) to increase control over and to improve their health. Priority will be given to projects which address the needs of black and minority ethnic children and young people, and which clearly demonstrate partnership.

The closing date for applications is 4 December 1998. For an application pack (which also includes priorities for adults) please contact Sean Maxwell at Southwark Social Services, 0171 525 3744.

Help with your applications

● Southwark Community Care Forum: *Developing early intervention proposals for joint finance*, Thursday 29 October 1998, 10.00 am– 1:00pm, Scott Hall, Cambridge House, SE5. This seminar will cover how to develop ideas into proposals, how to fill in the form, budgeting, defining your partners, and both adults' and children's priorities. To reserve a place, fax Julie Lomax, 0171 703 7661.

● Southwark Children and Families Alliance, Southwark Health Alliance and Cultural Unity Working Group: *Developing proposals for health promotion work with young people*, Tuesday 17 November 1998, 2:30 in the Meeting Room at Peckham Pulse, 10 Melon Road, SE15 5QN. Background information and one to one advice for organisations considering submitting proposals meeting with Southwark Health Alliance's priority. Further details from Neil Orr (0171 252 5859) or Jane Miller (0171 716 7027).

SSI Inspection of services for ethnic minority children & families

The Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) will be undertaking an inspection of services for ethnic minority children and families provided by Southwark Social Services Children's Division. The inspection will examine the policy and strategic framework for services to children, management systems, quality and practice issues and the range of services provided by Social Services and other agencies. Questionnaires are being sent to a sample of service users, and the SSI will be arranging meetings with community groups during the fieldwork phase (24 November – 4 December 1998).

Southwark Children and Families Alliance and Cultural Unity Working Group are holding a briefing meeting for local voluntary organisations and community groups to inform them about the inspection and to discuss what issues they might wish to raise with the SSI.

Monday 23 November 1998, 2:00 – 4:30 pm, the Chapel Room, Clubland, 54 Camberwell Road, SE5. Further details from Neil Orr (SCFA, 0171 252 5859) or Angela Johnson (CUWG, 0171 740 6160).

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Children in Southwark

Newsletter of Southwark Children and Families Alliance No.2 - November 1998

New voluntary sector representatives in Southwark joint planning

Two new voluntary sector representatives have been elected to the Children's Joint Strategy and Commissioning Group (JSCG), the principal joint planning body for children's services in Southwark. The JSCG includes representatives from health, education and social services as well as the voluntary sector.

Mary Gardiner (Blackfriars Settlement, 0171 928 9521) and Sharon Smith (Capital Carers, 0171 793 0966) will be ensuring that the views of the voluntary sector are taken into account at the JSCG. They will be reporting back regularly to meetings of the Children and Families Alliance, and other organisations will be able to highlight issues they would like their representatives to raise with the JSCG. Mary and Sharon will be supported in their role by the Alliance's Children and Families Policy Officer, Neil Orr, who also attends JSCG meetings.

The JSCG has identified two main programme priority areas for the next year: combatting social exclusion and supporting children with special needs. A number of areas are to be looked at in detail including school attendance, parenting, communication skills of under 5s, respite care, children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and support to enable children with disabilities to remain at home.

The Alliance submitted a policy paper to inform the JSCG's recent meeting on parenting action programmes (see Children in Southwark No.1), and it is planned to make a similar contribution to future discussions.

The next area to be discussed at the JSCG will be respite care for children with disabilities. If there are any issues you would like to raise, please contact Neil Orr (0171 252 5859).

● The voluntary sector also have a representative on the Area Child Protection Committee: Patricia McDade, Charterhouse in Southwark (0171 403 4367). She is interested in any concerns local voluntary organisations might have about child protection and family support in Southwark.

Children & Families Alliance Meeting

Open to all voluntary organisations working with children in Southwark

**2:00 pm – 4:30 pm,
Wednesday 9th December 1998**

in the Scott Hall, Cambridge House, 131 Camberwell Road, SE5

Agenda items will include Child and Adolescent Mental Health, latest funding news (including New Opportunities Fund for out of school hours childcare), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, updates from health, education and social services plus a chance to network with your voluntary sector colleagues.

(please note: the following Alliance meeting will take place from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm on Tuesday 26 January 1999, and will feature Liz Sayce, Director, LSL Health Action Zone).

National Children's Policy Overview

In the first 18 months of the current government we have seen a proliferation of consultation papers, task forces, policy reviews and legislation relevant to children. The Children and Families Alliance discussed some of the key developments at its October meeting, summarised here.

Health and Social Care

● There is a big push towards closer joint working between health and social services, and local authorities generally. The Department of Health has issued a discussion document **Partnership in Action** proposing legislation to allow health and social services to pool budgets, and for NHS Trusts to provide social care services (or social services to provide health services such as chiropody or physiotherapy). This could enable one provider to offer an integrated service, rather than users receiving services from different agencies.

● For the first time, the government has set out joint national priorities for health and social services. As far as children are concerned, the emphasis in this **National Priorities Guidance** is on children looked after by local authorities (mainly in foster placements and children's homes). This is quite a small group of children (54,000 nationally, 585 in Southwark last year), but we know that these children tend to have very poor life chances and often poor health in later life. Local authorities, with the support of health services, have been set some very specific targets. For instance by 2001, 50% of children leaving care must have at least one GCSE or GNVQ.

● Closely related to this is **Quality Protects**, a Department of Health framework aiming to improve the well-being of children supported by local authorities. It sets out eight key objectives, such as ensuring "that children are securely attached to carers capable of providing safe and effective care for the duration of childhood" and that "children in need gain maximum life chance benefits from educational opportunities, health care and social care"

● Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham is one of 11 areas selected to become a **Health Action Zone**. HAZs are about working across health and social care boundaries to improve the health of the local population. The successful LSL HAZ bid is called "Children First" with programmes including parenting, youth crime, substance misuse, sexual health, children with special needs, socially excluded children, healthier communities and training and employment.

● Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Health Authority will be leading in developing the local **Health Improvement Programme** to "bring together the local NHS with Local Authorities and others, including the voluntary sector, to set the strategic framework for improving health". The local HImP, due by mid-January, includes children's health as one of its four priorities.

● Other elements of the New NHS, particularly **Primary Care Groups**, will also have an impact on services for children.

Childcare and Education

● In May the Department for Education and Employment published **Meeting the Childcare Challenge**. This proposes a National Childcare Strategy aiming "to ensure good quality, affordable childcare for children aged 0 to 14 in every neighbourhood". There is a commitment to increase childcare places: £400m lottery funding will be available for after school clubs and homework clubs. Local Early Years and Childcare Partnerships have to submit Childcare plans to the DfEE by February 1998.

● **Surestart**: £540m has been allocated for this programme focusing on disadvantaged pre-school children (under-3s). In an initial three-year programme, 250 centres will be opened in areas of greatest need, combining advice and support for parents with a range of child care, early education, health and play facilities.

● In the wider education field there is an increasing awareness of the role of community-based projects such as after school clubs, supplementary schools and family literacy schemes, often provided by the voluntary sector. This has partly informed the development of **Education Action Zones** aiming to raise school standards in under performing areas whose population are experiencing relative disadvantage. North Southwark is one of 25 EAZs nationally. Terry Powley, Director of North Southwark EAZ, has identified a number of key components of the Zone in addition to classroom teaching including early years provision, out of hours programmes, parental and community involvement and healthy living.

Youth justice

● **Local authorities have to establish Youth Offending Teams**, including police, probation, education, health and social services (voluntary organisations may also be involved). YOTs will provide pre-sentence assessments to courts, administer community sentences, supervise offenders on release and write an annual Youth Justice Plan. They will also have a focus on youth crime prevention. Voluntary organisations could be commissioned to provide preventative services as well as specialist services such as bail support.

Key themes for the voluntary sector

● **Social exclusion and inequalities:** there is a clear recognition that these underlie social and health problems. Voluntary organisations are often working with the most excluded individuals and groups, so we will have a crucial role to play.

● **Partnership working:** for many policy initiatives there is a requirement to have a multiagency group to come up with a local action plan. There is an expectation that the voluntary sector will be involved on most such groups.

● **Quality standards/Best value:** in addition to centrally determined quality standards, local authorities will have to review all services in a 4-year rolling programme to determine whether they offer best value to the public in terms of quality and cost-effectiveness. This will apply to council-funded voluntary sector providers too.

● **Listening to users (including children):** for instance Quality Protects states that Local authorities should "have a mechanism for hearing the views of children and young people about these services". Voluntary organisations have some useful experience of children's participation, but this is a challenging area for us too.

The role of the Children and Families Alliance

This overview has only covered a small number of key initiatives. Others are in the pipeline such as the Social Care White Paper and the consultation document on supporting families.

It is quite difficult for us to engage with all this as individual voluntary organisations, commanding a fraction of the resources of the statutory agencies. Working together as an Alliance, however, we can be a major force for shaping how this policy agenda is translated into action locally.

Resources

- **Factfile '99** (NCH Action for Children, 1998).
- **Children's services: now and in the future**, edited by David Utting (National Children's Bureau, 1998).

Taken together these two books constitute an excellent starting point for anyone trying to get to grips with the situation facing children in Britain today and the changing face of the services aiming to meet their needs.

Factfile '99 is a comprehensive overview of the current position. It includes a critical overview of the Government's social policy agenda on children's services, and detailed information covering such areas as poverty, housing, health, education, disability, young carers and child protection. Each chapter includes key developments, statistics and summaries of research.

A chapter entitled "A new dawn for social services and the voluntary sector?" looks at the impact of the contract culture and now Best Value on children's voluntary organisations. It suggests that current trends favour larger organisations and that a key challenge is "to find ways of sustaining small community based organisations and involving them in service planning and delivery". These smaller organisations have an important role in the Government's social exclusion agenda of involving marginalised communities.

Children's services: now and in the future is more visionary, considering new ways of structuring services to meet the needs of children and families. A key theme is the need to listen to the voices of children, in local and national government (a Minister for Children is proposed), in education and in the NHS. David Utting argues that listening is "a fundamental form of social inclusion, capable of showing children that they matter and belong" as well as informing adults about children's wishes and needs. Examples illustrating how this has been put into practice are provided.

Among other topics covered are children's services planning, preventive services for adolescents, promoting successful parenting and the role of the voluntary sector in promoting young people's mental health and well-being.

Children's Services Now and In the Future, £12.95 from National Children's Bureau Book Sales, 0171 843 6028/29; *Factfile '99*, £8.50 from NCH Action for Children, 0171 226 2033.

Funding news

This month's lottery winners

Congratulations to the following Southwark organisations, all of whom have received grants for children's projects under the National Lottery Charities Board Community Involvement Programme:

- Capital Carers (0171 793 0966): £67,070 over three years for project providing advice and support to young carers aged between 8 and 16.
- Child and Sound (0171 740 6866): £133, 631 over three years to provide music and music therapy workshops for children and young adults with special needs and learning difficulties.
- South London Family Service Unit (0171 733 6291): £152,675 over three years to recruit volunteers to provide a range of services including family advice surgeries, a parents support group, therapeutic groups for children and playschemes.
- St Michael Associates (0171 708 3939): £87,142 over three years to provide extra tuition and support for young people of African origin who are at risk of educational failure.

Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund

The Fund has announced that the priority for its 1999 funding round will be services for children and young people aged between 12 and 18 who have lost a close family member through bereavement or other circumstances. The following categories of loss have been identified:

- Children whose parent, prime carer or sibling has died;
- Young carers who have lost the person for whom they cared;
- Children with a parent or prime carer in prison;
- Children or young people in care;
- Refugee children alone;
- Children who have lost a family member as a result of violence.

For full details and an application pack, send a stamped addressed A4 envelope (39p stamp) to the Grants Department, First Floor, County Hall, Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 7PB.

Project news

Vietnamese Family Support Worker

Hung P. Nguyen is the new Vietnamese Family Support Worker at Southwark Refugee Association. He will be working with young Vietnamese people aged 10 to 14 to help them with difficulties in or out of school such as bullying, racism and abuse. The project will also help parents to understand the education system and how they can support their children, and will assist with translation.

Contact: Hung P. Nguyen, Family Support Worker, Southwark Vietnamese Refugee Association, Top Floor, Bellenden Road, SE15 4DG (tel. 0171 732 6114, Monday to Friday, 1 pm – 5 pm).

Parent Support Group – Special Educational Needs

A parent support group is now meeting regularly at Southwark Education's Albany Annexe. The group provides information and advice to parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs, as well as an opportunity for parents to share ideas and support each other. Outside speakers are invited. The next meeting will take place on 2 December 1998 at 10:30 and will include a talk on how to support children with Special Educational Needs during national tests and exams.

Contact: Frances Taylor or Cara Jones, Southwark Education Special Educational Needs, Albany Annexe, Albany Road, SE5 0BN (tel. 0171 525 2673).

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*Southwark Children and Families Alliance
brings together local voluntary organisations in order to promote the rights and
interests of children in Southwark.*



Children in Southwark

Newsletter of Southwark Children and Families Alliance No.3 - December 1998

Modernising Social Services

The Government's long awaited White Paper on the future of social services was published in November. 'Modernising Social Services' sets out the Government's plans for 'promoting independence, improving protection' and 'raising standards'.

The White Paper marks a shift towards a more directive role for central Government in establishing clear objectives for social services and managing their performance in meeting outcomes.

The White Paper acknowledges that on too many occasions 'social services have failed vulnerable children'. To redress this the Government sets out three priority aims:

- To ensure that children are protected from sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect;
- To raise the quality of care of children in care so that it is as close as possible to the care provided by loving and responsible parents;
- To improve the life chances of children in care, and of others who need social services' support, in particular through improving their health & education and support after they leave care.

Responsibility for regulating and inspecting care services is to be moved from local authorities to new, independent Regional Commissions for Care Standards (CCS). London is one of eight Regions in England. The CCS will be responsible for all children's homes (private, voluntary or statutory), independent fostering agencies, residential family centres and welfare inspections of boarding schools.

Within each Regional CCS there will be a senior level Children's Rights Officer. As well as taking charge of the children's regulatory function, this Officer will have to 'ensure that the views of children placed in the facilities and services regulated by the CCS are given proper weight'.

There will also be action 'to prevent unsuitable people from working with children' with a new Criminal Records Agency to 'improve and widen

access to police checks on people intending to work with children'.

The Government's approach to improving the quality of care for children has already been signalled in the Quality Protects Initiative announced in September. This sets out eight key objectives for improving the well-being of children supported by local authorities, including maximising life chance benefits from educational opportunities, health care and social care.

Local authorities have to submit a Management Action Plan setting out their plans in relation to Quality Protects by 31 January 1999. In Southwark this is being led by a Quality Protects Action Group based in social services (for details contact Jane Bowden, QP Planning Officer, 0171 525 3863).

The White Paper includes proposals for improving partnership working between social services, health, education and other agencies. It is stated that "social services should have good relationships with voluntary organisations, both in service provision partnerships and also in order to help understand the needs and views of users".

In keeping with this partnership approach the responsibility for children's services planning will shift from social services to the local authority as a whole. Children's Services Plans will be required to cover all services for children, including, for instance, housing for families in need.

Children & Families Alliance Meeting

10:00 am – 12:30 pm,
Tuesday 26th January 1999
Clubland, 54 Camberwell Rd, SE5

Guest speaker: Liz Sayce, Director,
LSL Health Action Zone 'Children First'

Other agenda items will include:
Quality Protects
Early Years & Childcare Development Plan

Children's mental health

Although severe mental illness is rare in children, mental health problems are relatively common. It has been estimated that "approximately 7,000 children and young people in Southwark may require help for a mental health problem (15 per cent). Of these, up to a third will have at least moderately severe difficulties" (Southwark Health Profile, 1997). Problems affecting young people can include anxiety, phobias, eating disorders, conduct disorders and depression.

Children with severe and long-term problems require specialist services, but preventive work is also very important to promote positive mental health and to treat problems before they become more serious. As well as causing distress to children and their families, untreated problems in childhood are associated with mental health difficulties in later life.

Positive mental health

Children's mental well-being is not simply the absence of illness, but includes a number of positive features including the ability:

- to develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually;
- to initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships;
- to become aware of and to empathise with others;
- to experience and integrate psychological distress without it hindering development

(NHS Health Advisory Service, 1995).

The voluntary sector and children's mental health

Recent research by Mhemooda Malek at the National Children's Bureau has highlighted the contribution voluntary organisations make to promoting children mental well-being by addressing "major risk factors associated with child and adolescent mental health problems". This applies not only to counselling and therapeutic projects, but to organisations who may not see themselves as having anything to do with mental health.

For instance academic failure and low self-esteem are both childhood risk factors associated with

later mental health problems. So voluntary organisations focused on education such as supplementary schools or literacy projects are also promoting mental health.

Voluntary organisations are also working to minimise the impact on children of other risk factors for mental health problems such as poverty, homelessness, family breakdown, parental alcohol and substance misuse and physical disability.

Projects in Southwark

Southwark Children and Families Alliance heard about a number of local voluntary sector projects at its December meeting.

- The Greenhouse Trust in Camberwell (0171 703 8419) undertakes long-term group work with children, many of them with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Groups stay together for four to five years, beginning when the children are about 8 years old. A wide range of activities are offered with the aim of helping children to develop their skills, capacities and relationships.
- Kids Company (0171 703 1808) seeks "to enhance the emotional quality of life for inner city children living in challenging and deprived circumstances". It sends teams into schools to provide one-to-one counselling, theme-related groups (e.g bullying, shyness) and arts and sports activities. Out of school activities are provided at its Arches Club in Walworth.
- The Place to Be (0171 820 6599) provides counselling to children in several Southwark primary schools (and others elsewhere), including Tower Bridge and Snowsfield.
- The Children's Society Genesis Project (0171 277 4898) provides advice, support and counselling for pupils, parents and teachers at Warwick Park School in Peckham. The Project has a permanent base at the school, so that children can drop by in times of crisis. As part of the school's Personal, Social & Health Education, the Project works with groups of children around relationships and resolving conflict.

**North Southwark Community
Child and Family Health Service**

Crispin Day from Lewisham & Guy's Mental Health NHS Trust told the December Alliance meeting about a new Health Action Zone-funded project in North Southwark. The project aims to develop an accessible, inter-agency community child and family mental health service providing mental health prevention, promotion and early intervention services for vulnerable children and families.

Mental health professionals will provide services in community settings including schools, GP surgeries and voluntary sector settings. Training will also be provided for non-mental health staff such as early years workers to help them enhance their ability to deal with child and parent difficulties.

A pilot project in Bermondsey using this approach has already proved successful in enabling children and parents to receive help to resolve emotional and behavioural difficulties at an early stage. It has shown that it is possible to make such help accessible to families who have traditionally been unlikely to access mainstream child mental health services.

The North Southwark Project will be establishing a cross-agency reference group to inform its work. Southwark Children and Families Alliance have been invited to nominate a voluntary sector representative to the group.

Lewisham & Guys also provide a Parent Adviser Service covering Bermondsey and Rotherhithe. The Service aims to help parents of children under five to explore ways of coping with the stresses of parenting. For further information call the Parent Adviser Service, 0171 629 0923.

**Young Minds
Parents Information Service**

Young Minds, the national children's mental health charity, provide a telephone helpline for parents who are worried about the mental health or emotional well-being of a child or young person.

0345 626376

Tuesday – Thursday, 1:00-4:00pm
(all calls are charged at local rate)

Childcare News

Early Years & Childcare Partnership

Southwark's Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership is in the process of developing its Plan for 1999/2000. A Childcare Audit is underway with providers being surveyed and parents being encouraged to complete questionnaires about their childcare needs. Information gathered will inform the Plan which will have to address meeting local shortfalls in terms of places and capacity for the childcare needs of children aged 0-14.

The Department for Education and Employment requires local Early Years Development and Childcare Plans to be submitted by the end of January 1999 which leaves little time for consultation on its content. However voluntary sector members of the Partnership will be able to contribute to the shaping of the Southwark Plan during January. Further information from Bonnie Royal, Southwark Education, 0171 525 5169.

New Opportunities Fund

The New Opportunities Fund has issued draft guidance on the new Lottery funding for out of school childcare and learning. Applications will be invited from Spring 1999 for two main areas:

- *Out of school hours childcare:* £220 million has been allocated to create out of school hours childcare places for 865,000 children across the UK by 2003. Funding will be available to create new places for children aged between 3 and 14 before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. This might include after-school clubs, holiday playschemes and childminder networks. Core funding will not be provided for existing projects which does not specifically relate to the provision of extra places. Local Early Years & Childcare Partnerships will have a key role in advising which providers should be funded.

- *Out of school hours learning:* £180 million has been allocated to establish out of school learning activities including homework clubs, help with literacy and numeracy, etc. Applications will have to involve at least one school and be linked to the school's overall provision and aims. However the activities could be provided by a voluntary organisation working in partnership with the school(s).

Dave Wallis, Southwark Education (0171 525 1504), will be helping to develop local NOF proposals.

Funding news

Funding Sources for Children's Organisations

This Southwark Community Care Forum/Children and Families Alliance training seminar will look at the range of funding options for children's organisations including local statutory funding, the New Opportunities Fund & the National Lottery Charities Board, trusts, foundations and corporate sources of funding.

9:30-4:30, Friday 5 March 1999 at Cambridge House, 131 Camberwell Road SE5. If you need a booking form please contact Neil Orr (0171 253 5289) or Julie Lomax (0171 252 5291)

Race Equality Grant

From 1 April 1999 approximately £6m will be available from the Home Office for "funding for additional support for ethnic minorities". It is understood that voluntary organisations will be able to apply for funding as well as the local authority. This Grant replaces the non-education part of the former Section 11 Funding. The education element of Section 11 funding is being replaced by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, managed by the Department for Education and Employment and primarily concerned with provision for minority ethnic children in schools.

A Meeting to update groups on the Race Equality Grant is being held on Monday 8th February 1999 at Sojourner Truth Community Centre, 161 Sumner Road, SE15 from 10.00am - 12.00pm. If you wish to attend please contact Paula or Wendy at Southwark Council's Equalities Unit (0171 525 7427).

Children's Social Services

Southwark's South District Office at 47b Dulwich Road closed on 4 December. The District and all of its services (including a Referral & Assessment Team, a Family Support Team and a Children Looked After Team) have been transferred to Sumner House, Sumner Road, SE15 5QS.

The telephone contact numbers for the Duty service (the initial point of contact for service users) remain 0171 525 1042, 0171 525 1043, 0171 525 1044 and 0171 525 1045.

Alliance Aims

The Children and Families Alliance on 9 December 1998 agreed the following set of aims:

Southwark Children and Families Alliance brings together local voluntary organisations in order to promote the rights and interests of children and families in Southwark. It aims to:

- advocate for high quality child and family-centred health, education and social care services for children and families in Southwark, informed by best practice and research;
- promote the informed involvement of the voluntary sector in the strategic planning of health, education and social care services for children and families;
- promote partnership between voluntary organisations and statutory agencies working with children and families;
- support and develop the capacity of voluntary organisations to provide quality services and to act as advocates and campaigners for children and families;
- promote the participation of children, parents and carers in the planning, development and delivery of services;
- develop an Alliance representative of the range of voluntary organisations working with children and families in Southwark.

While the Alliance works to promote the interests of all children, aged 0-18, its primary focus is on those children who have additional needs to their peers because of factors including relative deprivation, social exclusion, health or development problems, disabilities, caring responsibilities, involvement in the criminal justice system, or risk of significant harm.

Children in Southwark

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Editor: Neil Orr
(Children & Families Policy Officer)

Children in Southwark

Newsletter of Southwark Children and Families Alliance No.4 - January 1999

Supporting families

The Government has published **Supporting Families**, a consultation document summarising a range of proposals (many of them previously announced) for "strengthening family life".

Parenting support

Initiatives to promote good parenting include:

- The creation of a new National Family & Parenting Institute with £2m of government money to develop better parenting support;
- A new national parenting helpline to be developed by ParentLine to offer advice to parents and refer people to local sources of help;
- An expanded role for health visitors "embracing the whole well-being of parents and children as well as their physical health";
- The £540m Sure Start programme "to help children in their early years grow up with the skills they need to make the most out of school".

Financial Support for Families

From October 1999 the new Working Families Tax Credit will replace Family Credit, providing help to up to 1.5 million families on low income (as opposed to the 400,000 receiving Family Credit). A key component of the WFTC is the Childcare Tax Credit. Lone parents working 16 hours a week (and couples where both partners are working for 16 hours a week) will be eligible for up to 70% of the costs of approved childcare, up to a maximum of £70 a week for one child and £105 for two or more children.

As well as making childcare more accessible there will be opportunities for providers of childcare to increase their income by raising fees. Education and support will be needed to reassure parents that such increases will be covered by the Childcare Tax Credit and to help them access their full entitlement. In addition not all service users will be entitled to the Tax Credit and pricing policies will have to reflect this.

Family-friendly employment

It is proposed to enshrine some family-friendly employment practices in law, and to encourage others.

- The qualifying period for extended maternity leave will be reduced from two years to one year;
- Three months unpaid parental leave will be available for fathers when their partner has a child (parental leave will also be available when a child is adopted);
- There will be legal protection for employees who have to take time off for urgent family reasons.

Serious family problems

The document also summarises proposals for tackling serious problems of family life, including youth offending and domestic violence.

Consultation on Supporting Families continues until 15 March 1999. The document is available from the Stationery Office (0171 873 0011) for £5 or on the internet at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/

£1 million must go- last few days!

The Home Office has announced a new Family Support Grants programme to support voluntary organisations working with families. £7 million will be available over the next three years for work which establishes support services in parenting or enhances the delivery of services by voluntary organisations. Bids for grants of up to £50,000 are invited.

£1 million has been set aside for 1999/2000 with the main focus on work with boys, young men and fathers. Unfortunately the grant was only announced on January 6, with the deadline for applications being 31 January 1999. Interested organisations will have to move very quickly to obtain the application pack from the Voluntary & Community Unit, Home Office, Room 240, Horseferry House, Dean Ryle Street, SW1P 2AW (also available on the website www.homeoffice.gov.uk/)

Short term breaks from care for the families of disabled children

1. The need for respite

"At some time or another all parents sometimes feel the need to have a break from looking after their children. For parents with a disabled child finding ways of achieving this break through informal support networks may be more difficult, while the additional stresses and strains they face are likely to increase their need to have someone else look after their child for a short period now and again" (Barnardo's, What works for families with a disabled child, 1996).

The Department of Health Social Services Inspectorate recently found that short term or respite care was "almost universally regarded by parents as a critical service" but that there are high levels of unmet need across the country (Removing barriers for disabled children, 1998).

The situation in Southwark is particularly acute, and there is widespread frustration about the shortage of respite provision amongst parents and the voluntary organisations supporting them. The Audit Commission/Social Services Inspectorate Joint Review of Southwark Social Services found that there was "poor access to respite care for children with disabilities", and identified this as an area requiring development. Many families of children with disabilities, complex health or life limiting conditions are receiving no respite support.

2. Features of a good service

Barnardo's have summarised the features of a good service:

- The service being local;
- The programme being a positive experience for the child as well as the parent;
- Good quality child care;
- Availability on demand;
- Careful preparation for first placement;
- Adequate facilities to meet the needs of children requiring very specialist support (this might require collaboration with the health service);
- Age-appropriate care;
- Information and choice;
- Provision for emergency support;

- Short term care being available in a number of forms: home based, family placement, residential, day schemes and leisure options.
- Short term care should be only one facet of support services available to families; it is a component of family support not a substitute for it.

3. Services in Southwark

Residential

Within Southwark there are only four residential respite beds for children, at Orient Street. At any one time there is a waiting list of 9 to 10 children, and there are particular pressures during school holidays. Furthermore Orient Street is geared primarily towards children with learning difficulties. Families of children with physical and medical needs are not always able to take advantage of the care offered at Orient Street because of staff anxieties or parental concerns that the staff there may not have the specialised knowledge to meet the needs of their children.

Family based respite

Family based short term care involves a family taking care of a disabled child in their home for periods ranging from a few hours to weekends or even longer. Typically the same 'link' family will look after a particular child on each occasion. Such a service "offers non-institutional care, wider social experiences and increased independence for the child, while the parents often report a positive and supportive relationship with the host family" (Barnardo's).

Nationally there are more than 250 family based respite services (SSI, 1998), but there is not one in Southwark at present. A contract with the Family Welfare Association to provide such a service was terminated by Southwark Social Services in 1998 following problems. The Fostering and Adoption Team have taken over the support of a small number of carers recruited by FWA, but an ongoing family based respite service is not being provided.

Home based respite

Short term breaks can be provided by trained carers in the child's own home. In Southwark a children and families respite service is provided along these lines by Capital Carers. Carers provide practical, social and emotional support to the families of disabled or sick children, typically for several hours at a time. Care can be provided at night as well as in the day, helping parents sleep by for instance, changing incontinent children. In 1997/98, the service supported 34 families with demand greatly exceeding the available resources.

Holiday schemes

Only Connect provide a respite holiday playscheme for children with severe learning disabilities, as well as Breakaways holidays for teenagers (for 4 nights). A summer playscheme for under-5s with complex needs has been provided at Cherry Gardens with joint finance, run by a project group led by Optimum (Southwark Pre-School Learning Alliance have also been involved). Funding has now expired, and it unclear who will take responsibility for its future survival.

Other services

In addition to services established specifically to provide respite, many other services do in fact provide short term breaks to parents while working with children. This applies to early years provision, schools, leisure projects etc. Examples of such services provided by the voluntary sector in Southwark include:

- Only Connect's after school art workshops at Tuke School and Cherry Gardens and their Arts Saturday Club;
- Southwark Pre-School Alliance Special Needs Project supporting children to attend local pre-schools.

Disabled children should have the right to attend mainstream play and leisure facilities, but there are often considerable barriers to them doing so. Enabling disabled children to use mainstream play and leisure facilities can also help provide breaks from caring for parents, particularly during holiday periods. Examples of projects elsewhere include the use of sponsored childminders to enable children to access leisure activities and leisurelink schemes where disabled children are supported by individual workers to attend mainstream holiday playschemes.

4. Co-ordination between agencies

Services providing breaks for parents/carers as well as positive experiences for children can cross

the boundaries of health, social services, education and leisure. This can lead to difficulties in deciding who should pay for what service, resulting in delays for service users. The Government is encouraging agencies to look at pooling budgets to overcome some of these problems.

Agencies also need to have common and agreed eligibility criteria for services, which enable them to be accessed by all families in need of support. Criteria should not be based solely on the severity and complexity of the disability. At present services are mainly accessible to children with severe disabilities, but other families also have a pressing need for short term breaks. For instance parents of children with 'milder' disabilities can often be very isolated.

5. The role of the voluntary sector

As indicated above, the voluntary sector is a significant provider of short-term breaks in Southwark. However many of the services are funded on a fairly precarious short term basis relying heavily on charitable funding and the efforts of volunteers. Resources need to be made available to ensure their continued existence and indeed their expansion to meet local needs.

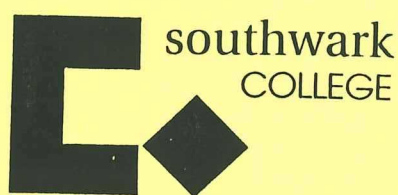
6. The way forward in Southwark

The Children's Strategy and Commissioning Group (the main joint planning body for children's services) has identified respite as a key local priority. At its January meeting it agreed to establish a working group to begin developing a commissioning strategy to expand respite provision for the families of disabled children. The group will include representation from the voluntary sector (Children & Families Alliance and Contact a Family) and will make some recommendations by the end of March 1999.

Clearly additional funding will be required to implement this, but without it families will continue to bear the costs of emotional, physical and financial strains. Furthermore when families break down under the stress, it is social services and other agencies who have to pick up the costs of very expensive (and unsuitable) residential placements for children with complex needs.

This is an edited version of a policy paper written for the Children's JSCG by Neil Orr, Children and Families Alliance following consultation with Camberwell Advocacy Office, Capital Carers, Contact a Family, Only Connect and Pre-School Learning Alliance Special Needs Project. If you would like a copy of the full paper, please call Neil Orr, 0171 252 5859.

Training



Southwark College provide a range of courses for people who wish to work, or who are already working with children and young people. These include preparatory courses, courses leading to professional qualifications and in-service and post-qualifying courses.

The College's 1999/2000 prospectus has just been published. Child care courses include:

- Play and children with special needs;
- Introduction to child care and play;
- Family literacy;
- Family numeracy;
- Effective parenting;
- Child minding (Certificate);
- Hospital play specialist (Certificate);
- Pre-school practice (Certificate);
- Playgroup practice (Diploma);
- Child care and education (NVQ 2/3);
- Nursery nursing (NNEB Diploma);
- Childhood studies – Nursery Nursing (BTEC Diploma).

For a copy of the prospectus, please call 0171 815 1600. There will be an open day on 26th January, 3.30-7.30 pm at Surrey Docks Centre, Drummond Road, SE16 4EE (most child care courses are taught at the Surrey Docks site).

PLAY TRAINING

The Play Training Project is now enrolling for two courses starting in March.

- Business start-up for After-School Clubs – a 6 week part time course for people who want to set up an after school club or review their current provision, covering marketing, fundraising and business planning.
- Opportunities through play – an 18 week part time course for people wishing to gain skills in working with children aged 5-15 years.

For information and an application form send a 31p SAE to Play Training Project, Unit 348, Camberwell Commercial Centre, 99-103 Lomond Grove, SE5 7HN. There will be an open day on Friday 26 February.

Cash boost for three year olds

Southwark has been granted more than £720,000 by the Department for Education and Employment to fund new early education places for three year olds. The Government is encouraging the expansion of early education, particularly in areas of greater social need.

In Southwark funding will be available for around 950 new free part-time places from the start of the Autumn term 1999. The DfEE has stated that the money should not be used to put three year olds in school reception classes. There will be a major impact on local playgroups in the voluntary sector, who will be able to provide free places to children whose parents would previously have had to pay.

The Early Years & Childcare Development Partnership will take the lead in planning the new places, and will have detailed proposals ready by June 1999.

Children in Southwark

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*Bringing together voluntary
organisations to promote the rights
and interests of children
in Southwark*

Children in Southwark

Newsletter of Southwark Children and Families Alliance No.5 - February 1999

Grants funding: situation stable

While voluntary organisations in some parts of London are suffering substantial cuts in council funding, the situation in Southwark is looking fairly stable. Most children's voluntary organisations previously funded by education or social services will receive grants similar to this year, and several will be council-funded for the first time in 1999/2000. Nevertheless some organisations are disappointed that their applications for funding have been turned down despite the quality of the services they provide.

Education and Leisure

Grants agreed by the Education & Leisure Committee for 1999/2000 include:

- £600,171 to 30 voluntary organisations providing youth services;
- £363,375 to 13 organisations providing play activities;
- £161,692 to 30 organisations providing supplementary education and mother tongue classes;
- £104,321 to six organisations providing after school clubs;
- £23,457 to four organisations providing homework clubs.

In addition, a range of organisations working with young people were funded in the arts, environmental and sports categories.

Among organisations to be grant funded for the first time are BOSCO After-School Club, the Hummingbird Community Project, Children's United Pop-in Drop-in (a new play facility in Peckham) and Gharweg, a group providing youth and supplementary education on behalf of the Ghanaian community.

Under-8s

15 voluntary organisations have been funded through the Under 8's Voluntary Sector Funding

Programme. Most community nurseries and pre-schools will receive the same funding as this year plus inflation. Several other applications from previously unfunded organisations were recognised as meeting the priorities but were not funded because of insufficient resources.

Organisation	Grant
All Nations Community Nursery	£108,742
Bermondsey Community Nursery	£102,265
Copleston Children's Centre	£90,138
East Dulwich Community Nursery	£77,632
Gumboots Community Nursery	£122,964
Rockingham Community Nursery	£109,455
Rosalind Community Nursery	£90,139
SRC Day Nursery	£132,019
Welcome Community Nursery	£117,071
Pre-School Learning Alliance	£293,866
Southwark Childminders Assoc.	£12,528
Happy Faces Playgroup	£10,119
Bosco Centre	£26,804
Camberwell After School Project	£10,998
Opportunities Playgroup	£5,291

Social Services

Seven children's organisations will receive social services grants to the total of £285,929. Most of these have been funded previously, with the exception of Contact a Family who will receive a grant for the first time for their work in supporting the families of disabled children.

Children's organisations are generally funded by social services with three year service agreements. On this occasion, funding will be for one year only, pending a review of priorities in the lights of Quality Protects and other government initiatives.

Organisation	Grant
Camberwell Advocacy Office	£23,374
Charterhouse	£20,114
Contact a Family	£30,000
Newpin	£36,704
Only Connect	£68,076
South London Family Service Unit	£74,694
Welcare	£32,967

For further information contact the Grants & Community Safety Unit, 525 7390.

1999: Year of the Plan

The Chinese New Year this month (February 16) sees the start of the Year of the Rabbit. But for many involved in children's services this will surely be remembered as the Year of the Plan.

A common model is emerging across the plethora of new government initiatives on children: set up a multi-agency partnership and produce a plan.

In many ways this is welcome. The partnership model provides real opportunities for voluntary organisations to influence the future of children's services. Written plans commit the agencies involved to specific actions, and they can be held to account if they fail to deliver. Better still, there is often extra government funding available to help implement the plans.

On the other hand there are concerns that the emphasis on producing a large number of written plans at short notice can get in the way of real planning. Gathering evidence about needs and considering the best ways of meeting them takes time. So too does developing partnership and meaningful consultation.

Despite the commitment to involving voluntary organisations, users and carers, this has been limited in practice due to the tight deadlines for producing plans. It is to be hoped that once this bout of 'planitis' has passed, the process can be slowed down to allow the wider participation in planning we have been promised.

This issue of Children in Southwark summarises progress with several key initiatives including Quality Protects, Early Years & Childcare and Surestart. Others to look out for include the Behaviour Support Plan, the Education Development Plan, the Health Improvement Programme and the Youth Justice Plan. We will be returning to these in future issues of the newsletter.

Quality Protects

Southwark Social Services have submitted their Quality Protects Management Action Plan to the Department of Health. Quality Protects (QP) is a three-year Government programme designed to ensure the effectiveness and good management of social services for children, within a framework of national objectives. The focus is on improving the life chances of children in need and looked after children, with an emphasis on improving their educational achievement and health and reducing the levels of offending.

The Southwark Management Action Plan sets out the Council's aims and objectives in relation to QP, with an action plan for achieving these objectives. It details how the Council will spend its Special Grant for implementing QP in the next year.

A range of services and other initiatives will be funded, including, among others:

- a children's advocacy resource;
- a care leavers project;
- supported lodgings for young people on remand;
- community-based family support for black and ethnic minority children;
- a family respite care scheme.

Some services could be commissioned from the voluntary sector. To find out more come along to the next Children and Families Alliance meeting on 17 March 1999, where Southwark Social Services will be outlining how QP is to be implemented locally (details on back page of this newsletter).

Education Action Zone

The North Southwark Education Action Zone aims to bring together schools, agencies, individuals and organisations to raise achievement, expectations and life chances of all pupils and young people in the area covered by the zone. The EAZ Action Plan sets out clear objectives and actions for achieving this goal.

Central to the EAZ is a recognition of 'the impact of living conditions within the inner-city on the social functioning and educational achievement of children'. The Action Plan demonstrates that the Zone is characterised by socio-economic deprivation and ill health as well as educational underachievement. As well as initiatives focused on the classroom there are plans for improving parental involvement, family literacy, and links with supplementary schools.

Copies of the Plan are available from the EAZ director Terry Powley (0171 407 7187). Comments are required by 12 March 1999. Voluntary organisations can also raise issues with Neil Orr, Children and Families Alliance (0171 252 5859), who represents the voluntary sector on the EAZ Action Forum.

Early Years & Childcare

The Government has charged local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships with developing a comprehensive strategy for the provision of high quality early years education and childcare, and after school and holiday provision for children aged 5-14. The strategy for Southwark is set out in the Early Years Development and Childcare Plan 1999-2000, submitted to the Department for Education and Employment in January 1999.

The Plan is informed by an audit of current provision and unmet need. While there are now enough places for all 4 year olds whose parents or carers want one, there are other gaps in provision and the Plan includes proposals for filling some of these. It is planned to create:

- up to 40 additional childcare places funded at 50% for children aged from birth to 2 years old including those with special educational needs;
- 950 part-time early education places for three year olds;
- an extra 300 places in after school clubs.

The Plan also includes proposals for improving access, quality and training. For a copy of the Plan call the Early Years Service (0171 525 5169).

The elected voluntary sector members of the Partnership are:

- Sessional under 5s: Jean Tucker, Pre-School Learning Alliance (0181 299 1878);
- Full day care under 5s: Rod Bowen, Copleston Children's Centre (0171 732 2544);
- Out of School Provision: Carmen Lindsay, Camberwell After School Project (0171 798 2711); Regina Bash-Taqi, Light-house Supplementary School (0171 403 0838);
- Special Needs: Linda Cleverley, Contact a Family (0171 277 4436).

Neil Orr, Children and Families Alliance (0171 252 5859), also attends Partnership meetings.

New Opportunities Fund

The Partnership has allocated £74,000 to provide support for organisations wishing to submit an application to the Lottery's New Opportunities Fund for out of school childcare and learning. NOF application packs are expected to be available by the end of February.

A seminar to brief organisations about the NOF out of school childcare and learning programmes has been arranged on Tuesday 9 March 1999, 3.00 pm - 6.00 pm at the Education Resource Centre, Cator Street, off Commercial Way, SE15. To book a place, or to find out more about the support that is available, contact David Wallis, Southwark Education & Leisure Community Development Manager 0171 525 1504. For the latest information on NOF check their website, www.nof.org.uk

Sure Start

Southwark is one of 60 'trail-blazer' areas chosen by the Government to pioneer the new Sure Start programme.

According to the Education & Employment Secretary, David Blunkett, "Sure Start will bring together early education, health services, family support and advice on nurturing for families when they need it most. It will enhance the life chances of children by ensuring that they are ready to learn and to thrive when they start school".

Sure Start programmes will include home visits to families with newborn children to help them access services and support, better coordination between services, and better access to early support including childcare, toddler groups, toy libraries, health services and educational programmes. Funding of up to £1 million a year is available over three years.

In Southwark it is proposed that the programme will focus on the Aylesbury area, covering the Browning and Faraday wards. National NEWPIN and Optimum Health Trust are leading in developing a partnership bid. Southwark Children and Families Alliance is also a partner and is discussing with local groups how they might be involved.

The application, with a 30 page action plan, has to be submitted by 19 March 1999. It will have to be endorsed by the Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership.

Further information: National NEWPIN (0171 703 6326) or Neil Orr, Children and Families Alliance (0171 252 5859).



KIDS is working with Southwark Education to provide a Home Learning Service for families with babies or young children with disability or whose development is causing concern. Home Learning Workers visit the family home and develop a specially designed programme of activities for each child. The aim is to work with parents/carers to encourage children to develop their skills and abilities. The individual Home Learning Programme is reviewed every three months to assess what the child has learnt and experienced.

KIDS is a small national voluntary organisation which provides a range of services to children with special needs and their families. Home Learning is also provided in Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea, and in the latter KIDS provide Home Based Respite Care. KIDS is planning to provide nursery training and consultancy, working side by side with nursery workers to share their experience of working with children with profound needs.

In April, KIDS Family Centres in Kensington and Camden will be merging to form KIDS London based at Thomas Coram Community Campus, Meckleburgh Square, WC1.

For information on the Southwark Home Learning Team, contact Veronica Boys, 0171 525 2918. For information on KIDS' other services contact Pat Clark, 0181 960 6767 (from 1 April, 0171 520 0405).

Children & Families Alliance Meeting

**2:00 pm - 4:00 pm,
Wednesday 17 March 1999
Clubland, 54 Camberwell Rd,
SE5**

Agenda items will include:

Quality Protects

*- new social services plans for children;
Special Educational Needs*

Surestart

Funding update (NOF etc.)



Alliance meeting dates

Southwark Children and Families Alliance has held three successful meetings since its first event in October 1998. With a regular attendance of more than 20 organisations, the meetings are becoming an essential place to find out about what's happening in children's services in Southwark and to network with voluntary sector colleagues. The proposed 1999 meeting dates are as follows:

- Wednesday March 17, 2:00 - 4:30 pm;
- Thursday May 6, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm;
- Tuesday July 6, 2:00 - 4:30 pm;
- Wednesday September 15, 2:00 - 4:30 pm;
- Thursday November 25, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

If you are aware of any clashes with other major children's events, let us know and we will try and rearrange dates. We would like to hold meetings in different parts of the borough, so if you have facilities to host a meeting of this size, please get in touch.

In addition to the Alliance meetings we are also planning a series of training courses and a launch event. Watch this space for more news.

Are you connected?

The Children and Families Alliance has a new e-mail address (see box below). We hope to make more use of e-mail to circulate Alliance information, so if you have an e-mail address let us know and we will add you to our mailing list. We are also setting up a website; if you have one too, send us details so that we can add a link to it on the Alliance site.

Children in Southwark

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Editor: Neil Orr

(Children & Families Policy Officer)

*Bringing together voluntary organisations to
promote the rights and interests of children
in Southwark*

Children in Southwark

Newsletter of Southwark Children and Families Alliance

No.6 - March 1999

Budget 99: new support for families

The Government's 1999 Budget includes a range of measures designed to increase support for families with children, stating that 'To build a strong economic future, the Government recognises the need to invest in children'. It sets out 'to reverse the decline in the provision society makes for families with children through the tax and benefits system'. The share of tax paid by households with children has increased since the 1970s.

Children's Tax Credit

The married couple's allowance is to be removed from April 2000 and replaced by a new Children's Tax Credit from April 2001. The Children's Tax Credit will be available to families with one or more children and will be worth around £416 a year (compared to a married couple's allowance of £197). It will go to around 5 million families, although it will be tapered away for families where there is a higher rate taxpayer.

Child Benefit

The Government has stated that 'support for children will in the future be built on universal Child Benefit paid to the main carer'. Child Benefit for the eldest child will be raised by £2.95 a week from April 1999 and by a further 3% from April 2000 to £15 for the first child and £10 for subsequent children. Child Benefit will not be taxed.

Working Families Tax Credit

The Government had previously announced that Working Families Tax Credit would come into effect from October 1999 to boost the incomes of low and middle income working families with children. About 1.4 million families will be eligible for WFTC compared with 500,000 who would have received Family Credit, which WFTC replaces.

The WFTC includes a childcare tax credit, whereby lone parents working more than 16

hours a week (or couples where both partners work more than 16 hours a week) will be able to receive up to 70% of childcare costs. The maximum amount families could receive is £70 a week for one child in childcare, £105 for two or more children in childcare.

Budget 99 increases the basic Working Families Tax Credit by £2.50 a week, with an extra £4.70 per week for children under 11 in families in receipt of income related benefits (including Income Support and Job Seeker's Allowance). It is planned that combined with reform of income tax rates these changes will provide a minimum income for a family with someone in full time work of £200 a week, or £10,400 a year, from October 1999.

Maternity Allowance

Women in low paid part-time work do not currently qualify for paid maternity leave. Entitlement to maternity allowance is to be extended to women earning less than the lower earnings limit (£66 a week), but more than £30 a week.

Surestart Maternity Grant

The Social Fund Maternity Payment of £100 is to be replaced with a new Sure Start Maternity Grant of £200 for mothers in low income households. The Grant will help with the initial costs of having a new child and 'will be linked to contact with a healthcare professional to ensure expert advice on child development and services'.

The Budget has been welcomed by the Child Poverty Action Group, which hailed the increase in child benefit and the children's tax credit as 'an important recognition of the need to support families with children'. However CPAG warned that 'there should be no complacency' given that 'around 3.9 million children will continue to live in poverty in the UK'.

The full Financial Statement and Budget Report is available on the internet at www.official-documents.co.uk/document/hmt/budget99

*The Daycare Trust have produced a briefing paper **Making the most of the Childcare Tax Credit**, available for £2 from Daycare Trust, Shoreditch Town Hall Annexe, 380 Old Street, EC1V 9LT (0171 739 2866, fax 0171 739 5579).*

New in Southwark

South London FSU /Welcare

Two of the major local voluntary sector providers of family support services have recruited new senior officers.

Suzanne Connolly is the new Unit Manager of South London Family Service Unit (0171 733 6291), replacing Nick Topliss. Suzanne comes to Southwark from Brent where she was manager of the FSU for over 3 years. She also worked for Southwark Social Services from 1986 to 1989.

Sue McQueen is the new Team Manager of Southwark Welcare (0171 701 4904). She has previously worked in social services in Liverpool, with a particular interest in the mental health of children and adults.

North Southwark Community Child & Family Service

Three Child Mental Health Specialists have recently been employed to develop a range of community based child mental health services in the Walworth area. The aim is to make services accessible for children and their families by offering to see children in schools, health centres and other local services. Training will also be offered to a range of local practitioners.

Helen Dalton, Matt Ellis and Mervyn Jones (0171 620 0923) are keen to establish links with relevant local voluntary organisations. The service will be part of the new South London & Maudsley NHS Trust, formed from the merger of Lewisham & Guy's and Bethlem & Maudsley NHS Trusts on 1 April 1999.

Southwark Strategies

Southwark Council is developing 13 Key Strategies to ensure a systematic and coherent approach across the Council. This issue of Children in Southwark includes details of the Crime & Disorder and Social Inclusion strategies, which were discussed at the Strategic Committee on 24 March. Others include Health, Transport, Environment, Regeneration, Economic Development, Housing, Education, Life Long Learning, Social Care, Leisure and Community Governance.

Crime and Disorder Strategy

The Crime and Disorder strategy is being developed by the Safer Southwark Partnership, which includes the Council, the police, probation and other agencies. Two of its eight strategic objectives relate specifically to children and young people.

Objective 6 is to 'Reduce the proportion of young people involved in crime through establishing a multi-agency Youth Offending Team'. Proposed actions include developing effective drug treatment programmes for young offenders and intervention to divert young people from offending.

Objective 7 is to focus 'early preventative action on children who are at greatest risk of becoming involved in crime in later life'. Proposed actions include ensuring that 'leisure and employment opportunities are accessible and relevant to socially excluded young people'.

Further information: Stan Dubeck, Grants & Community Safety Unit, 0171 525 7322.

Strategy for Social Inclusion

Social exclusion has been defined by the Government as a set of circumstances in which 'individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdowns and withdrawal from community networks'. Social exclusion is particularly acute in Southwark, which has been rated the 8th most deprived borough in the country.

Children are bearing the brunt of exclusion, with many living in poverty and unsuitable housing as well as facing less obvious obstacles. For instance, the Strategy highlights the deprivation experienced by children as a result of not being able to participate in leisure activities like swimming and cycling with their friends. The need for more safe children's play spaces in Southwark is recognised. The Strategy proposes that employment, housing, regeneration, transport, leisure and other initiatives need to be brought together to lessen barriers to social inclusion. There is also a strong emphasis on community involvement and developing the capacity of communities to help themselves.

Further information: Ashy McKay, 0171 525 7384.

In addition to the 13 Key corporate strategies, Council departments have been developing other strategies and action plans, including those focusing on Special Educational Needs and Domestic Violence.

Special Educational Needs

Southwark Education have been consulting with schools and parents on their Special Educational Needs Action Plan. The key principles of the Plan are:

- to offer a continuum of provision for parents and pupils by which individual needs can be met from pre-school to 16 or 19 as required;
- to extend local choice for pupils and parents, in particular by developing additional provision at mainstream schools.

It is proposed that by September 2002, every Southwark pupil on the roll of a Southwark special school will receive part of their education alongside mainstream pupils at a mainstream school or college. The role of local Special Schools will develop to take on providing support and training to mainstream schools. Mainstream primary and secondary schools will be encouraged to develop provision for children with complex needs, with appropriate specialist resourcing.

The Plan includes a commitment from the Local Education Authority to partnership working, including 'Working with voluntary agencies... to deliver quality services and encourage parental input'.

The Plan's principles have been broadly welcomed by local voluntary organisations working with children with disabilities and special needs. They have, however, asked for more details about how these principles will be translated into practice.

The draft SEN Action Plan is available from Southwark Education Pupil Support and Special Educational Needs, 0171 525 2674.

Domestic Violence Forum

Southwark Domestic Violence Forum aims to raise awareness of the nature and extent of domestic violence and to improve the services available to women and children suffering from it. The Forum includes representatives from a range of voluntary and statutory agencies concerned with domestic violence.

The Forum's action plan, which is currently being consulted on, includes as one of its key objectives 'Protecting Children'. Proposed actions include developing schools' policies on domestic violence and liaison with social services on vulnerable children.

The next meeting of the Forum takes place on Monday 12 April, 1.00 m-3.30 pm at the Town Hall.

For further information contact Jane McTaggart at the Council's Community Safety Unit (0171 525 7351). Ceri Goddard, Southwark Action for Voluntary Organisations' women's worker, is co-ordinating voluntary sector involvement (0171 703 8733).

Training

**Working with children
with special needs in the
early years**



Southwark Pre-School Learning Alliance and the Play Training Project are offering a training course for those interested in working with children with special needs in the early years, with particular reference to the role of the SEN Coordinator (SENCO). The course runs for 12 weeks from 22 April 1999.

Application forms are available from the Play Training Project, Unit 348, 99-103 Lomond Grove, SE5 7HN (0171 703 4163).

Southwark College

In addition to the childcare courses included in their prospectus (summarised in Children in Southwark no.4, January 1999), Southwark colleges are providing the following courses:

- Advanced baby practitioner (60 hours course from September 1999; post-qualifying or 2 years experience);
- Protecting children (60 hours from Sept. 1999; post-qualifying or 2 years experience);
- Certificate in sessional creche work (80 hours from January 2000) - this course includes ideas on play skills, how to run a creche, and how to identify the needs of babies.

Further details from: Hazel Burgin, Programme Manager, Child Care & Counselling, Southwark College, Surrey Docks Centre, Drummond Rd, SE16 4EE (0171 815 1500).

Funding news

Joint Finance

Ten Southwark voluntary organisations working with children and young people have secured joint finance funding for 3 years from 1999/2000:

- Only Connect: Butterfly Playgroup for children with severe learning disabilities;
- Home Start Southwark: funding to develop work in North Southwark;
- South London Family Service Unit: community-based parenting skills programme;
- Charterhouse in Southwark: support for children & women living with domestic violence;
- Camberwell After School Project: parent support programme;
- Southwark Muslim Women's Association: language development skills for children;
- Southwark Black Women's Centre: parents and children's education scheme;
- Lighthouse Supplementary School: Fit Kid programme aiming to improve fitness levels and eating habits and reduce accidents;
- Sherie Eugene Community Deaf Association: healthy living project for young deaf people;
- Westminster House Youth Club: healthy living project for young people in Nunhead area.

From next year the Department of Health will no longer be ringfencing part of the money it gives to local Health Authorities for joint finance. Discussions are continuing with LSL Health Authority to encourage it to continue with some kind of local 'Innovations Fund'. The amount of money involved - currently around £300,000 a year - forms a small part of its expenditure, but it has been a vital source of funding for innovative health and social care projects.

Children & Families Alliance Meeting

2:00 pm - 4:30 pm,
Thursday 6 May 1999
Scott Hall, Cambridge House,
131 Camberwell Road, SE5

*Guest Speaker: Chris Domeney, Manager,
Southwark Youth Offending Team*

*Plus: new childcare funding for 3 year olds,
and updates on all the latest developments in
services for children.*

New Opportunities Fund

Application packs are now available from the New Opportunities Fund (0845 604 0555) for the Out of School Hours Childcare Programme. £220 million has been allocated to create 865,000 out of school childcare places for children by 2003. Funding will be available for projects providing new places for school children aged 3 - 14 before and after the school day or during school holidays. This could include breakfast clubs, after school clubs and holiday playschemes.

Application packs for the NOF Out of School hours Learning Programme are expected to be available in April. £180 million has been allocated to fund activities such as homework clubs, help with literacy and numeracy, etc.

For details of local support with applications, contact David Wallis, Southwark Education & Leisure Community Development Manager (0171 525 1504).

Peckham Partnership Community Fund

Grants of up to £2000 (exceptionally £5000) are available to voluntary and community organisations in the Peckham Partnership area. One of the priorities is supporting activities which 'increase the active engagement of young people in making a positive contribution to community life'. Application forms are available from the South East London Community Foundation (0171 582 5117).

Children in Southwark

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(Children & Families Policy Officer)

*Bringing together voluntary organisations to
promote the rights and interests of children
in Southwark*

Children in Southwark

Newsletter of Southwark Children and Families Alliance

No.7 - April 1999

Southwark Sure Start gets green light

Southwark is one of 21 areas given the go ahead by the Government to join the first wave of Sure Start programmes. Sure Start aims to improve the lives of families with children under four, offering support to ensure that children are given the chance for a successful start to life and good preparation for schooling. In Southwark, the programme will focus on families on the Aylesbury Estate.

The Southwark Sure Start proposal was submitted by National Newpin and Community Health South London NHS Trust on behalf of a broad partnership of local agencies. Other than Newpin, voluntary organisations involved include Welcare, Contact a Family, Southwark Black Women's Centre, the Pre-School Learning Alliance and several others currently working with young children in the area. Southwark Children and Families Alliance is also a partner, and will be helping to coordinate voluntary sector involvement in family support.

The area

The national Sure Start Guidance requires local partnerships to select a small geographical area with a population of up to 1000 children aged 0-4. The Aylesbury area, bounded by East Street, Walworth Road, Albany Road, and Surrey Square, meets these criteria. The Aylesbury Estate, the largest in Southwark, has high levels of social deprivation. New services provided through the Sure Start programme will also be accessible to people living in the surrounding area, but the main focus will be on families living on the Aylesbury Estate and five smaller adjacent estates.

The Sure Start Programme

Sure Start is not just about providing new services. It is also about empowering the local community, and improving coordination between services. The Sure Start programme will liaise

closely with other local initiatives, in particular the proposed New Deal for Communities regeneration programme for the Aylesbury area.

The six main strands of the Programme are as follows:

- Home Visiting and outreach - health visiting, maternity and other services will be coordinated to ensure that all families with young children have access to advice, support, information and assistance;
- Support for families and children: in consultation with parents, new ways of delivering parenting support will be considered;
- Play, learning and childcare: there is an Early Years centre in the area, and several voluntary sector pre-schools and parent & toddler drop-ins;
- Primary and community healthcare;
- Specialised services: this will link in with social services support to children in need and work with children with disabilities and special needs;
- Additional services: including money and housing advice.

Funding

The Southwark Sure Start application sought revenue funding in the region of £900,000 a year, but the final amount will be subject to further discussion with the national Sure Start Unit and may have to be scaled down.

Funding is guaranteed for three years but there are indications that the programme could continue for seven years with a view to bringing about permanent change in the way families are supported. The programme will be closely monitored to evaluate the outcomes of particular approaches.

The next step

The Southwark Sure Start partnership is now meeting regularly, and plans to have a detailed delivery plan by July with the Programme itself starting from September 1999.

Further details: Neil Brady, National Newpin (0171 703 6326), Neil Orr, Southwark Children and Families Alliance 0171 252 5859).

Training

Southwark Community Care Forum/Children and Families Alliance recently ran a successful course on funding sources for children's organisations. As part of our Summer 1999 Training Programme, we have now arranged courses looking at aspects of fundraising in more detail, including local authority funding, fundraising from Trusts, and running a Capital appeal (e.g. fundraising for a new building). Other one day courses, which will be suitable for both children and adults' voluntary organisations, include food hygiene, emergency first aid and raising the profile of your organisation.

If you have not received a copy of the training programme, please contact Julie Lomax, SCCF, Training and Development Project (tel.0171 252 5291, fax 703 7661).

Jobs

Green Adventure, a local community environmental project, is recruiting to several new posts. These include a Schools Health Worker (2.5 days a week), to develop practical healthy eating projects with local schools, and a Volunteer Co-ordinator (2.5 days a week). Both posts are £19,807 pro rata. For an application pack send a CV and large SAE by 30 April 1999 to GA Recruitment, 128 Poplar Rd, SE24 0BP.

LAMBETH VOLUNTARY ACTION COUNCIL

Children & Families Development Officer.

Fixed Term 2 years.

Salary £20,415pa (SO1 equivalent) pro rata 17.5 Hrs.

This post is funded by Joint Finance. The post holder will be a resource for children and families groups, and will build and support partnerships and networks. We are looking for someone with two years experience of organisation development and capacity building.

For an application pack, please send a 39p A4 SAE to LVAC, 95 Acre Lane, London, SW2 5TU.

Closing date is 5.00pm 4th May. Interview end of May.

LVAC is supported by Lambeth Council.

LVAC is committed to equal opportunities in employment and in all its activities. LVAC operates a no-smoking policy.

Funding News



New Opportunities Fund

Application packs are now available from the New Opportunities Fund (0845 604 0555) for the Out of School Hours Learning Programme. £180 million has been allocated to fund regular out of school hours learning activities in half of all secondary and special schools, and a quarter of all primary schools in the UK.

The range of learning activities NOF will support is very wide, including helping young people with literacy and numeracy; sports, games and adventurous outdoor activities and creative ventures like music, drama and art. Learning activities have to be directly linked to particular schools' overall provision and aims. The activities could be provided by a voluntary organisation, but they would have to apply in partnership with a named school or schools.

Priority will be given to schools and areas where children are disadvantaged or at risk of underachievement, which clearly applies to most parts of Southwark. Funding will be available for up to three years, unlike for the NOF Out of School Child-care Programme, for which funding is available for only one year.

Southwark's Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership has set up an Arts, Drama and Music sub-group to look at developing out of school provision in these areas. For details of this and other support with NOF applications, contact David Wallis, Southwark Education & Leisure Community Development Manager (0171 525 1504). Application forms and further information about NOF are available on the internet at www.nof.org.uk

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

The focus of this Trust's UK Social Welfare programme is on tackling multiple deprivation. Grants of up to £10,000 are available for creative approaches to reducing family poverty, and for out-of-school projects using innovative methods to redress the educational and social disadvantage of children in deprived neighbourhoods. The Trust also has an Education programme (including arts for young people in schools) and an Arts programme (including arts for young people outside of formal education settings). The next Trustee meetings are in July and November; papers are finalised a month before.

For details contact Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, UK Branch, 98 Portland Place, W1N 4ET (0171 636 5313).

Health changes

1 April 1999 inaugurated some significant changes in the local health landscape, with new NHS Trusts and Primary Care Groups coming in to operation.

Trust Mergers

- Community Health South London NHS Trust (0171 635 5555) has been created from the merger of Optimum and Lambeth Healthcare Trusts. The new Trust is providing community health services across Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham. Among the services for children and families are health visiting, school health, paediatric home care, and speech and language therapy.
- South London & Maudsley NHS Trust (0171 703 6333) is the new mental health trust, replacing Lewisham & Guys and Bethlem & Maudsley. It is responsible for mental health services in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham and Croydon, including child and adolescent mental health services.

Primary Care Groups

- Primary Care Groups formally came into existence on 1 April, although they have been meeting as 'shadow' PCGs for several months. PCGs are central to the Government's new NHS agenda, and will decide on local NHS spending to meet local NHS needs. PCGs are managed by Boards consisting of GPs, practice nurses, representatives from the local Health Authority and the local Council, and one lay member from the local community. They will be gradually take over many of the functions of the Health Authority, including improving the health of the local community, developing primary and community health services and commissioning hospital services appropriate to local people's needs.
- In Southwark there are two Primary Care Groups. The North Southwark PCG (0171 716 7076) covers the Newington, Faraday, Burgess and Rotherhithe wards, and all wards to their North. The South Southwark PCG (0171 737 3139) covers the St Giles, Brunswick, Liddle, Friary and Consort wards, and all wards to the South of them. The boundary runs along John Ruskin Street, Albany Road and Old Kent Road.
- Voluntary organisations working with children and young people will have an important role in assisting PCGs to fulfil their roles of health improvement and service development. Some voluntary organisations will be looking to the PCGs for funding once they take on responsibility for commissioning of services. In order to build links with PCGs it would be useful for voluntary organisations to begin collecting data on need, activities and the use of their services on the basis of PCG area.



As part of the ongoing reorganisation of Social Services offices, the Adoption and Fostering Team and the Children with Disabilities Team have both moved to 47b East Dulwich Road, SE22 9AN. The Duty numbers (the initial point of contact for the public) are:

Adoption and Fostering
0171 525 4488/4489

Children with Disabilities
0171 525 4406

If I could fly

The cold breeze, the blue skies
no one hears
but my inside cries.
On my own I fend for myself
you have no friends
you just have yourself

The South London Gallery recently hosted the launch of *If I could fly*, an anthology of writings from young men at Orchard Lodge Resource Centre.

Orchard Lodge, which is managed by Southwark Social Services, provides residential and day places for young men in crisis aged from 10 to 17, many of whom have been charged or found guilty of grave offences. It includes a 24 place secure unit.

Writer and artist Michael McMillan has worked with some of these young men to help them express themselves through poetry, prose and painting. The result is a moving collection giving voice to experiences of exclusion, racism and crime, but also of hope.

If I could fly (120 pages) is available for £10.99 including postage and packing from Orchard Lodge, William Booth Road, SE20 8DG (0181 402 9696).

Children and Families Alliance News

March Alliance meeting: Quality Protects

Anne Chan (Assistant Director - Children, Southwark Social Services) attended the March meeting of the Southwark Children and Families Alliance to talk about Quality Protects.

Quality Protects (QP) is a three-year Government programme focusing on improving the life chances of children in need and looked after children, with an emphasis on improving their educational achievement and health and reducing the levels of offending. Southwark Social Services will be using its QP Special Grant to commission a range of services and other initiatives, some of them from the voluntary sector.

Social services are currently developing specifications for these services, and deciding on the commissioning process. In the mean time, any voluntary organisations interested in discussing providing one or more of the services outlined in Southwark's QP Management Action Plan should in the first instance inform Neil Orr at the Children and Families Alliance. He will co-ordinate informal expressions of interest and pass on the information to Social Services.

A copy of the relevant parts of the Plan, setting out action and expenditure, is available from Neil Orr (0171 252 5859). Social Services' lead officer for Quality Protects is Andrew Downing (0171 525 3677).

Voluntary Sector and Schools Survey

Voluntary organisations make a valuable input into the education children receive in local schools. Activities include supporting children in schools, offering a specialist input into the curriculum, hosting educational visits and providing out of school learning and childcare.

Southwark Children and Families Alliance is currently undertaking a survey to develop an overview of the work undertaken by the voluntary sector with primary and secondary schools in Southwark. A questionnaire has been sent to more than 300 local voluntary organisations. We will be using the survey results to inform schools, the education authority and the North Southwark Education Action Zone about the work the voluntary sector is doing. We also want to identify what help voluntary organisations may need to develop their work in this area.

If your organisation has not received a questionnaire, please call Neil Orr (0171 252 5859). Questionnaires should be returned by 31 May 1999.

Children & Families Alliance Meeting

2:00 pm - 4:30 pm,
Thursday 6 May 1999
Scott Hall, Cambridge House,
131 Camberwell Road, SE5

Including: Panel discussion on parenting support, new childcare funding for 3 year olds, updates on all the latest developments in services for children, and a chance to network with your voluntary sector colleagues

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